great power of the rebellion in the West, which is mainly arrayed on the line from Columbus to Bowling Green, and can speedily be concentrated at any point of that line which is attacked singly." Mr. Lincoln replied at once.[1] " Your despatch of yesterday," he said, " disappoints and distresses me." The President went on to say that he would rather have a point on the railroad south of Cumberland Gap than Nashville. He dwelt on the grievous disappointment which would be felt by the people of East Tennessee when they should hear of General BuelPs views. McClellan also wrote to Buell,[8] saying that the latter's telegram developed " a radical difference " between their views which he (McClellan) deeply regretted. Then he proceeded :

"My own general plans for the prosecution of this war make the speedy occupation of East Tennessee and its lines of railway matters of absolute necessity. Bowling Green and Nashville are in that connection of very secondary importance at the present moment. My own advance cannot, according to my present views, be made until your troops are solidly established in the eastern portion of Tennessee. If that is not possible, a complete and prejudicial change in my own plans at once becomes necessary.

"Interesting as Nashville may be to the

Louisville
interests, it strikes me that its possession
IB of very
secondary importance in comparison
with the im-
mense results that would arise from the
adherence to
our cause of the masses in East
Tennessee, West

[1] 7 W. R., 927.
*•#-. 53i: Jan. 6, 1862.